

Liturgical Reflections 2026

Principle celebrations of the year 2026

First Sunday of Advent November 30, 2025

Ash Wednesday February 18, 2026

Easter Sunday April 5, 2026

The Ascension of the Lord [Thursday] May 14, 2026

Pentecost Sunday May 24, 2026

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ June 7, 2026

First Sunday of Advent November 29, 2026

Cycles: Lectionary for Mass

Sunday Cycle year A November 30, 2025 to November 22, 2026

Weekday Cycle cycle 2

January 12 to February 17, 2026

May 25 to November 28, 2026

Sunday Cycle year B November 29, 2026 to November 21, 2027

Liturgy of the Hours

Nov. 30, 2025 – Jan. 11, 2026 Advent, Christmas

Jan. 12 – Feb. 17, 2026 Weeks 1 to 6,

Ordinary Time

Feb. 18 – May 24, 2026 Lent, Triduum, Easter

May 25 – Aug. 1, 2026 Weeks 8 to 17,

Ordinary Time

Aug. 2 – Nov. 28, 2026 Weeks 18 to 34, Ordinary Time

Nov. 29, 2026 – Jan. 10, 2027 Advent, Christmas

The readings singled out are the second ones for each Sunday and major feast day. Note that for the most part the excerpts are taken from existing files posted on this homepage.

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30 November, First Sunday of Advent

11. Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. 12. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. 13. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 13.11-14

Paul presumes that his listeners are familiar with the hour or *kairos*, this being more than chronological time, an occasion fraught with urgency and demanding action. Most likely the *kairos* at hand pertains to whether or not the Romans will accept Paul's message. The verb *eido* or to know suggests a perceiving or beholding which involves taking in what's seen as a whole. Paul fleshes out this *kairos* by calling it "full time" which reads literally as *hora* (hour) and also refers to a given period as during a year. Here *hora* is a more specified time in the sense of heightened awareness of the urgency at hand. That translates into whether to accept the Christian message or not. In other words, Paul is putting his listeners on the spot. "To the present hour we hunger and thirst" [1Cor 4.11]. So within this *kairos* the *hora* consists of waking from sleep, a way of saying that the Romans hadn't been aware of Jesus Christ.

The urgency of waking up is spelled out in the second sentence of vs. 11 where Paul says that salvation is closer than first imagined, again using the first person plural with the verb being *pisteuo* connoting belief as well as acknowledgment. This *pisteuo* came into existence early on ('when we first believed') or when the Romans first heard about Jesus Christ, possibly by missionaries who had arrived in the capitol before Paul.

Vs. 12 continues the temporal imagery though it's rooted in a *kairos* event. That is to say, Paul speaks of night's advancement, *prokopto* meaning to advanced (*pro-* before). "And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people" [Ga. 1.14]. This advancement is equivalent to the last night watch just prior to first light of day. That day is, of course *kairos*. During this twilight time a person is to start getting rid of what was done at night, *ergon* or work as well as enterprise and put on the armor of light. That intimates preparing oneself for a coming battle where the *ergon* of night still can advance with their attacks in the form of reveling, drunkenness, debauchery, licentiousness, quarreling and jealousy.

Paul equates putting this armor not just with Jesus Christ himself but as Lord, and like a conventional piece of armor, requires time and care that it may fit properly. Once done, a person is ready for battle which Paul puts in terms as not giving room to the flesh. *Pronoia* is the noun for provision meaning forethought, *pro-* as before and suggests thinking about oneself instead of the amour as Jesus Christ. The noun *epithumia* or literally desire-upon (*epi-*) is more or less equivalent to the six base practices Paul lists in vs. 13.

7 December, Second Sunday of Advent

4. For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. 5. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6. that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8. For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9. and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise thee among the Gentiles and sing to your name." Romans 15.4-9

Paul speaks thus after quoting Ps 69.9 with the full verse in mind as well as other biblical references pertaining to Jesus Christ, all being for our instruction, *didaskalia*. This is directed to the end of

steadfastness and encouragement, both *hupomone* and *paraklesis* having the preposition *dia* or through. The former literally means a waiting under (*hupo-*) and the latter, a calling beside (*para-*). In the verse at hand both are with respect to scriptures which, in turn, impart hope.

In the previous verse Paul speaks of *hupomone* and *paraklesis*...waiting under and calling beside...with regard to scripture whereas here both are attributed directly to God. It seems that the two are obtained by reading or hearing scripture both of which put one in touch with their source resulting in living in harmony. The text reads literally “to give the same to comprehend,” the verb *phroneo*. Such comprehending isn’t done in isolation but literally “in (*en*) one another” as well as *kata* or “in accord with Christ Jesus.” I.e., first comes the “in” followed by “according to.”

Homothumadon is an adverb meaning of one accord or having the same *thumos* or desire, as well as being aware of the same principle of life. “All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer” [Acts 1.14]. The sameness (*homoios-*) of this *thumos* is re-enforced by a oneness (*hen*) of voice. It’s put at the service of giving God glory, *doxazo* being the verb also identified as being the Father of Jesus Christ.

In vs. 7 Paul parallels the welcoming of each other with that of Christ, *proslambano* being the verb and has greater force insofar as the verbal root *lambano* (to receive) is prefaced with the preposition *pros-*, direction towards-which...in sum, an active going-out.

These five verses are jammed together because they form one unit where Paul borrows four biblical verses. He begins by saying that Christ became a servant or *diakonos* which differs from the slave-like nature of a *doulos*. Christ-as-*diakonos* is twofold:

1) To manifest divine truth (*aletheia*) for the Jews. This truth consists in (*eis* or into) confirming the promise or *epaggelia* given long ago to the patriarchs, namely Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, this being spelled out as well in 9.8.

2) That the Gentiles glorify God, *doxazo*, his mercy or *eleos* which also means compassion but specifically in that they’re on the same plane as Israel, the subject of Chapter Eleven.

Now Paul quotes from four verses as follows:

1) Ps 18.49 which pretty much parallels the Hebrew as “For this I will extol you, O Lord, among the nations and sing praises to your name.” The “for this” is deliverance from enemies noted in vs. 48. The LXX has the verb *exomologeo* (cf. 14.11) means to confess as well as to praise while the Hebrew *yadah* fundamentally means *to cast, to throw* (usually upwards); the idea is that one’s hand is raised to point out something.

2) Dt 32.43 in vs. 10 which runs in full as “Praise his people, O you nations; for he avenges the blood of his servants and takes vengeance on his adversaries and makes expiation for the land of his people (literally, ‘his land his people’).” Note the distinction between people and nations, the former being Israel and the latter, Gentiles. For praise the LXX has *euphrainomai* or to rejoice, make glad.

3) Ps 117.1 in vs. 11 which parallels the verse at hand as “Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!” Here all nations and peoples are included which can apply to Israel as well.

4) Is 11.10 in vs. 12: “In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.” The words “in that day” are akin to a *kairos* event which isn’t bound by space and time. In the context at hand, this *yom* (day) will occur once the flood, if

you will, of divine knowledge mentioned in the previous verse has enveloped the earth. The “nations” (*goy*) more specifically imply non-Israelites compared with the more general term *ham* or “peoples.”

8 December, Immaculate Conception

[3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him. [5] He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.* Ephesians 1.3-6

Right at the beginning of this Epistle Paul calling himself an apostle or *apostolos*, literally as one who is sent and identifies himself with the saints or *hagios*, one who holy. Such a term seems to distinguish the fledgling church from the majority of people who are not Christians. The church of Ephesus is comprised of people are faithful or *pistos*, having faith in Christ Jesus. Chances are they had been *pistos* prior to Paul's arrival and knew of his former role of persecutor of Christians. Paul's use of will (of God) or *thelema* can refer to his conversion in Acts, Chapter Nine and intimates his former persecution of the first Christians.

Grace and peace or *charis* and *eirene* do not come from Paul himself but from God the Father ('our') and Jesus Christ as Lord. Note Jesus Christ compared with Christ Jesus in vs. 1. It is as though Paul were bestowing upon the people of Ephesus the same gifts he had received during his dramatic conversion.

The first word of vs. 3, blessed or *eulogetos*, sets the tone for the remaining chapter and applies to both God as Father and Jesus Christ as Lord or *Kurios*. *Eulogetos* consists of the root *logos* (word-as-expression) prefaced with *eu-* (well) and has three instances in this one verse: 1) *Eulogetos* blessed, something uttered well on behalf of the Father and Christ and is the only use of this term in Ephesians. 2) The verb “has blessed” or *eulogeo* is the root for *eulogetos* and the only use in Ephesians. This is the first instance of the use of the preposition *en* or “in” and sets the tone of “in-ness” through vs. 14, “in Christ.” 3) *Eulogia* or blessing which is the only use of this word in Ephesians; the second use of *en* or “in.” *Pneumatikos* or spiritual modifies this noun or that which is of the (Holy) Spirit, *Pneuma*. This is the third use of the preposition *en* or “in.”

Heavenly places or *epouranios*, an adjective as substantive suggests that the “place” where we have been blessed “with” or literally *en* ('in') spiritual blessing is apart from the physical place in which we now reside. In other words, the *eulogia* is kept in reserve for a future use and date and not accessible at the moment.

Vs. 4 continues from the previous one referring to God the Father and begins with *kathos*, even as which suggests something on the same level as that which preceded it, the words of vs. 3. *Eklego* or chose which has the preposition *ek* (from) prefaced to the root *lego* (to gather, to pick) and serves to emphasize the act of choosing. This choosing-from takes place *en auto* or “in him,” the fourth use of this preposition; i.e., an *ek* followed by an *en*.

Katabole or foundation literally means a casting or throwing (*ballo*) down or against (*kata-*). This noun can intimate the creative action of God in Gn 1.1. The throwing-together of *katabole* can refer to the six days of creation when everything was thus cast together into one whole. The choosing of us “in him” or Jesus Christ thus has taken place before this *katabole*. In the verse at hand, *katabole* is used with regard to *kosmos* which basically means an adornment, usually applicable to a woman and later as order in the sense of good government.

Hagios (cf. vs. 1) and *amomos* or holy and blameless which is before or *katenopion* which literally means in the presence of compared with the *pro* with respect to *kosmos*.

The Greek text of vs. 5 has “in love” in the previous verse, *agape*, usually considered untranslatable and not unlike the Hebrew *chesed*. This is the fifth occurrence of the preposition *en* or “in.” *Agape* occurs next in 1.15: “Because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints.” Such *agape* is tied up with the verb *proorizo*, literally, to mark out with a boundary: *pro* (before) prefaced to *horizo*, to separate by a boundary. *Proorizo* is used with the sixth instance of *en* or “in” regarding *agape*.

The single noun *huiiothesia* means “to be his sons” and has the seventh instance of the preposition *eis* (‘into’) and literally translates as “son placing” (*huios* + *thesis*). “So that we might receive adoption as sons” [Gal 4.5]. Such is the object of divine *proorizo* or “marking out beforehand.” A eighth instance of the preposition *eis* (into) which is not translated by the RSV and that reads “into him.”

Kata as “according to” implies a pre-existing plan or foresight which here modifies *eudokia* or “purpose” which means literally good (*eu-*; see vs. 3 for other examples) prefaced to the verbal root *dokeo* (to think, to suppose, to imagine).

Note the sequence of prepositions, free-standing and prefaced to word; they are intended to show the progression of this verse: *pro(orizo)*->*eis*->*dia*->*eis*->*kata* or before->into->through->into->according to.

The preceding verse flows into vs. 6 with the ninth use of the preposition *eis* (into) signifying full presence or “being into” *epainos* which also can apply to any type of commendation. Glorious is a noun, *doxa* (glory) being used with another noun, *charis* or grace which also means favor and goodwill. *Charis* is found in the next verse and derives from the verb *charizomai* or freely bestowed.

En or here as “on” is the tenth use of this preposition with respect to the verb *agapao* (perfect passive participle and root for *agape*). Note that Christ is the recipient of the Father’s *charis* and thus becomes *agapao* which means *agape* is exchanged between them both.

14 December, Third Sunday of Advent

[7] Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain. [8] You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. [9] Do not grumble, brethren, against one another, that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the doors. [10] As an

example of suffering and patience, brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.
James 5.7-10

Makrothumeo or to be patient consists of *makros* or large prefaced to a noun (*thumos*) whose root refers to breath, spirit or heart all rolled into one. In other words, James is urging his readers to have a large or expansive heart. However, it's to last for a given period of time, that is to say, until the Lord's coming or *parousia* which literally means a being present-with or about. Thus *makrothumeo* will fill in this unspecified time and make it pass quickly. Actually it has a way of transcending time.

In vs. 7 we have *idou* or behold, a way of gaining attention which here intimates encouragement through an example very familiar to most of James' audience. It pertains to a farmer whose chief job is to wait or be engaged in the just mentioned *makrothumeo* which receives (*exdechomai* also as to take) both the early and late rain. Such rain refers to the spring and late summer or early autumn. Note that the fruit is called *timios* or precious meaning that the farmer is utterly dependent upon it.

Following the example of the farmer, James' readers are to engage in *makrothumeo* which any reader can tell by now is essential to this excerpt. Following it is establishing their hearts for the Lord's coming or *parousia*, his being beside. The verb is *sterizo* or to make fast or permanent because this *parousia* is near, *eggizo*. In a way this verb is not necessary because the *para-* or of *parousia* represents nearness.

There's a tendency not to engage in *makrothumeo*. Instead, one may grumble, *stenazo* also to sigh deeply which grabs attention and results in being judged. As for this judgment, it is coming anyway because the Judge himself is standing at the door. That is to say, he is engaged in *parousia*. Being aware of this is what James is trying to get across to those he's addressing. He like to use the example of prophets who spoke in the Lord's name. If they can do this, so those whom James is addressing can imitate them.

21 December, Fourth Sunday of Advent

[1] Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God [2] which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, [3] the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh [4] and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, [5] through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, [6] including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; [7] To all God's beloved in Rome who are called to be saints. Romans 1.1-7

Romans begins straightaway with Paul mentioning his own name so as to make sure his listeners knew it was coming from him and from no one else. No biographical introduction is needed—people knew about Paul's earlier career of persecuting the budding Christian community—this being secondary to the theme of Romans, the person of Jesus Christ. As for these listeners, Chapter Sixteen has a list of some thirty-four individuals meaning that if Paul didn't know them personally, he knew their names. Even

more profoundly, ignorance of fellow Christians at a distance proves no barrier to communion with them.

Paul is eager to get his name out among his audience as being subordinate to Jesus Christ which takes the form of a servant or *doulos*...more a slave...a condition familiar to everyone at the time, so much so that barely it was given a thought. However, Paul shifts the subjugated nature of this *doulos* condition not to a human master but to Jesus Christ. The idea is that Jesus is not unlike master of a household, a *despotes*. Paul elaborates upon himself as a *doulos*, that is, identifying his servile condition with an *apostolos*, apostle, one who is sent as on a mission. Thus we have Paul as a *doulos* as well as an *apostolos* under the authority of *despotes*, a word not found in Romans. The *despotes* or Jesus Christ trusts an *apostolos* well enough to leave the household on business without running away or taking advantage of his position. In other words, he was a mature person who could perform his duty without constant supervision. Furthermore, *doulos* is dubbed *kletos* or called which means to be invoked or summoned. Of course, this refers to Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus.

The verb *aphorizo* for set apart in vs. 1 means to mark off (*apo-* for *aph-*, from prefaced to *horizo*, to set a boundary). It lacks a definite article which can be taken as a lack of identity not in the negative sense but at the service of the person (Jesus Christ) to whom it is applied. While the preposition *apo-* signifies separation or a going away from, the other preposition used with it is *eis*, going in the opposition direction or literally into. In sum we have a setting-from which passes into, or to use the prepositions again, *apo* -> *eis*.

Here *eis* pertains to *euaggelion* or gospel (good news). This good news is in contrast to "bad news," if you will, something people were all too familiar with. What makes *euaggelion* even better is its association with God making such good news continuously fresh but also not novel. As for the transmission of news, good or bad, often it was done by someone like a herald who read it aloud in a city square or the like.

In the same breath where he mentions Jesus Christ, in vs. 2 Paul speaks of the gospel, the two being indistinguishable. Aware that he's addressing a largely Jewish audience, he situates this good news in the grand tradition of Israel's prophets. Note, however, that he doesn't include Abraham, Moses, the patriarchs, the judges and King David. Nevertheless, such good news is promised beforehand or *proepaggello* which consists of two prepositions prefaced to the verbal root *aggello*, *pro* and *epi* or before and upon. This makes the verb read literally as "announce before upon."

The words "in the holy scriptures" are a further way of safeguarding and being rooted in that tradition. Hopefully the reader will focus upon Isaiah's suffering servant not unlike the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading about this person and didn't understand until he had met the apostle Philip. Acts 8.34 puts this well, applicable to the situation at hand: "About whom does the prophet say this, about himself or about some one else?"

Compare vs. 3 with vs. 1 where we have "the gospel of God," here we have "(the gospel) concerning (*peri*) his Son" or Jesus Christ which is more specific. Thus the two—God and Jesus Christ—are one and the same and are interchangeable as far as the gospel is concerned.

Paul gets more specific as to the *euaggelion* which is not composed by Jesus nor handed down by him but by those acquainted with him, especially his disciples. He claims that Jesus is a direct descendant of

King David (note his omission as discussed in vs. 2 relative to the prophets) or according to the Greek text, “from the seed of David.” Paul singles out David by reason of being Israel’s most famous king, a prototype or forerunner of Jesus Christ as well as associated with being the author of many Psalms. Paul adds “according (*kata*) to the flesh (*sarx*)” which situates Jesus Christ in the kingly line of David which would make reception of him more palatable to his audience.

Vs. 3 has “the gospel according to his Son” whereas vs. 4 has “designated Son of God” which is more striking, putting Jesus Christ on the same level as God. The verb is *horizo* meaning to mark out as a boundary as noted in vs. 1 with respect to *aphorizo* (to set apart). Such bounding, if you will, is governed by the operation of two prepositions, *en* and *kata* or in and according to. The former pertains to power or *dunamis*, a wide ranging term involving authority and the capacity to do (or not to do) something. The act of *horizo* done by the Father isn’t random. Rather, the preposition *kata* or according to represents the governing principle not just of the Spirit (*Pneuma*: also means breath) but as the one who possesses holiness (*hagiosune*) relative to Jesus’ resurrection.

The small preposition *dia* (through) in vs. 5 is important in that it reveals the role of mediation by Jesus Christ. Through him it effects reception (*lambano*) of grace and apostleship or *charis* and *apostole*. The former translates as favor and kind feeling towards someone. The latter is the office or role of apostleship which hearkens back to the twelve, Paul being an addition to that membership. *Apostole* is bound up with *charis* and imitative of the original twelve apostles who had been with Jesus, some of whom were currently at work in other places even though we have no word here of their activity. *Apostole* is thus directed to or *eis* (into) *hupakoe* or obedience as it pertains to faith, this word meaning literally a listening-from under (*hupo*-). So *eis* represents full attentiveness through listening and a response through faith which essentially means subordinating one’s faculties so that they do not interfere with this listening-under.

The *eis* or into relative to *hupakoe* is followed immediately by its practical application, namely, *en* or “in all nations” or where such *hupokoe* is to take up its residence. It has a specific goal, namely, to make the name of Jesus Christ present *en* these nations which intimates their collective memory or in the way each nation preserves recollection of its identity.

By using such words in vs. 6 as “including yourselves” (the conjunctive *kai* or and) Paul intimates that the Romans whom he’s addressing will be numbered among the nations mentioned in the previous verse and will assume a central role to effect the *hupakoe*...the listening-under...relative to faith. And so these Romans, the “you” at hand, are called *kletos* not unlike Paul himself where this word applies to him.

Paul concludes in vs. 7 by addressing directly his audience, “all.” Despite any distinctions, all are *agapetos* or beloved, this word being derived from *agape*. The former was much larger and the latter not only smaller but new to the capitol. Regardless, to both the adjective *kletos* or called is applied, suggesting that they didn’t achieve special status in God’s eyes on their own but by divine choice. Concurrent with *kletos*, if you will, is the other adjective *hagios* translated as saints or those who are holy, set apart, this word being related to *hagiosune* (‘holiness’) in vs. 4.

Not untypically Paul uses a conventional greeting of *charis* and *eirene*, grace and peace linked with God the Father and Jesus Christ. By this simple acknowledgment of the basic tenet of Christian faith (compared with Judaism, for example), Paul demonstrated that he no stranger to them.

25 December, Christmas

[16] So Paul stood up and motioning with his hand said: "Men of Israel and you that fear God, listen. [17] The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. [18] And for about forty years he bore with them in the wilderness. [19] And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years. [20] And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. [21] Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. [22] And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart who will do all my will.' [23] Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. [24] Before his coming John had preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. [25] And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' Acts 13.16-25

Vs. 16 begins with *de* translated as "so" and is in reference to Paul because what follows is typical of his boldness, a taste of what is to follow for the bulk of Acts. We can imagine him waiting...itching...for the synagogue leader to motion him to speak. If this man only knew what he was about to unleash. Tradition holds Paul as an apostle, so that in a way we could attribute his address as the beginning of that office. This becomes more apparent in vs. 32 when he uses the first person plural, "And we bring you the good news."

Paul addresses the congregation both as men of Israel and those who fear God, the two being synonymous with *phobeo* being equivalent to the Hebrew verb *yare'*, to fear in the sense of having respect. He launches into an account of what we call salvation history going through vs. 41 as a preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. Although this is the first such account on his part, we can assume he had done it before in one form or another when sent to Tarsus. There he eagerly devoured any and all information about Jesus as well as from Barnabas and the other apostles. One thing is certain about Paul. He cannot be accused of negligence when it came to doing his homework.

Although later on Paul mentions Abraham, the ur-father of Israel, interestingly he doesn't start off with him along with the other patriarchs. He moves on to identify God with "this people," having made them great while in Egypt. The verb is *hupsoo*, to raise up, to exalt along with *paroikia* with reference to Egypt proper. The idea is that the Israelites brought there by Joseph whom Paul doesn't mention as well as his father Isaac are at home (*oikos*) in the sense of being beside or *para*...at home but in exile. Obviously this *hupsoo* didn't take place overnight but involved a period of some four hundred plus years. After this extended period of time God led Israel from Egypt by means of his uplifted arm, *hupselos* which is akin to the just mentioned *hupsoo*.

We have a glaring omission in vs. 18 where Paul doesn't mention the Exodus just like Stephen. Perhaps the reason is that both were more focused upon the salvific work of Jesus Christ which culminated in his resurrection, that supplanting the Exodus event. Now in the same verse Paul switches over to how for forty years God cared for the Israelites in the wilderness, *trophos* which consists of *trophos* or

one who raises or nurses and *phoreo*, to bear or to carry. Yet another omission, indeed a big one. The key figure of Moses isn't mentioned.

Paul passes over Joshua as well who of course is important but secondary, given the context that Canaan had been promised to Israel as inheritance, *katakleronomeo*. The noun *kleros* is lot as in casting of lots while the verb itself is prefaced with the preposition *kata* or in accord with. The Israelites prospered there for some four hundred and fifty years under the guidance of judges, unique for the time. Then Samuel came on the scene when the people asked for a king. Nothing is said about how this had displeased the Lord nor his rejection of Saul. Instead, Paul continues saying that the Lord had provided Saul as king after which he removed him, *methistemi* literally as to stand or to place after, *meta*.

With the advent of David as king, Paul knew he was getting closer to introducing his main theme, Jesus Christ. Vs. 22 gets to the heart of his message by the following verbs, the first applicable to Saul and the other three to David:

- methistemi* or to remove as just noted
- egeiro* or raised up
- martureo* or testified
- heurisko* or found

As for the election of David, the Lord says that he is a man after or in accord with his own heart, *kata* with *kardia*, and will do not just his will or *thelema* but all his will. Thus we have one heart for God as well as for King David. The context is a quote from Ps 89.20 which runs in full as "I have found David my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him." The Hebrew verb *mashach* or to anoint, of course, is the verbal root for Messiah, the Anointed One comes on the threshold of Paul mentioning Jesus Christ, the posterity or *sperma* (seed) of David which is in accord with the divine promise, *epaggelia* with *kata*. And so he presents Jesus as successor to King David and not so much a king but a savior, *soter*.

Now in vs. 24 Paul switches from what later was called the Old Testament to the New Testament, the starting point being with John. Before Jesus came on the scene, John was preaching a baptism of repentance or *metanoia*, literally a putting of the mind after, *nous*→*meta*. The verb at hand is *prokerusso*, the preposition *pro* as before. It's used with the free-standing preposition *pro* and *prosopon* which also has this preposition, literally "before the face" of Jesus' coming. The noun is *eisodos*, "into the way" compared with the proper noun for *exodos*, "from the way" or more readily as entry and exit. As for John's message, it's for all those belonging to Israel, one step before what Jesus proclaims, all the people.

In vs. 25 Paul situates John the Baptist in essentially the same role as previously recounted, that is, as secondary to Jesus Christ. *Dromos* is the noun which Luke uses to describe his life, a course as in running a race which John is on the verge of fulfilling. In fact, he paraphrases him taking the words of Jn 1.20: "He confessed, he did not deny but confessed, 'I am not the Christ'" [Jn 1.20]. Paul continues to say that despite John's central roll, he is unworthy to untie the sandals of Jesus, citing in part Jn 1.27. Again, we see that clearly Paul had done his homework. He had the advantage of Barnabas who was present as a silent witness ready to chime in if necessary, he being an apostle and first-hand witness who easily could corroborate anything Paul had said.

Paul also was fully aware that he had to maintain a civil relationship with his audience in the synagogue. For this reason in vs. 26 he addresses them as brethren or *adelphos* before commencing to speak more precisely about Jesus. He divides them into two groups. The first are those closer to him by blood ties, that is, the sons of Abraham's family. The second are those "among you" or literally "in (*en*) you" who apparently are not of this group but closely associated with them. Gentiles, perhaps?

In his address Paul is essentially echoing Peter's vision of a sheet let down from heaven where no distinction is made between Jew and Gentile. The latter fear God, *phobeo* being equivalent to the Hebrew *yare'* or having respect. Next or in the same breath follows recognition that "to us" (i.e., Jew and Gentile) has been sent the message not just of salvation (*logos* and *soteria*) but this salvation, the one at hand to which he's bearing witness. To Paul...and this will become clearer in future generations...*logos* = the *Logos*. Paul obviously was taking care to watch himself during his address. Given his tendency to be over zealous, he has to keep it reigned in so as not to alienate anybody. Again, that's where Barnabas is helpful as a guide to keep Paul on the straight and narrow.